



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TENNESSEE DISTRICT ATTORNEYS LAUNCH STATEWIDE  
TEEN PREGNANCY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference kicked off today the *What's the Rush?* campaign, a statewide effort to educate Tennessee's youth about the legal, financial and social consequences of becoming teen parents.

The *What's the Rush?* campaign targets Tennessee teenagers and provides a video and printed materials to show the reality of teen parenting using real Tennessee teen parents. The district attorneys will be visiting schools and civic organizations across the state to spread the campaign's message.

The number of teen pregnancies continues to increase in Tennessee, subsequently raising the number of child support cases being processed in every county in the state. *What's the Rush?* takes an in-depth look at real Tennessee teens and their struggles of being teen parents.

"Tennessee's district attorneys are on the front line of this issue," said Guy Jones, deputy director of the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference. "Teen pregnancy is on the rise in Tennessee, and an unfortunate consequence is the number of child support cases district attorneys see across the state."

The most recent statistics from 2006 show that there were more than 13,000 cases of teen pregnancy reported statewide. These alarming statistics are bringing an overwhelmingly high number of teen paternity and child support cases to Tennessee's courts.

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The legal implications of teen parenthood are disturbing to Tennessee district attorneys. Families and communities suffer from the consequences of children having children. Education levels of teen parents are much lower than average because most teens have a difficult time balancing school and parenthood at such a young age. And, statistically, children born to teen mothers are more likely to end up in jail at some point in their lives.

The campaign, citing statistics from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy, emphasizes the many negative effects of teen pregnancy, including:

- Eight out of 10 teen fathers do not marry the mother of their first child.
- Less than half of mothers who have a child before they are 18 years old graduate from high school, and less than 2 percent have a college degree by age 30.
- Teen fathers have less education and earn much less money than teenage boys without children.
- The children of teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and at a low birth weight, which can cause infant death, blindness, deafness, respiratory problems, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, dyslexia and hyperactivity.
- Children of teen mothers are 50 percent more likely to have to repeat a grade in school and are less likely to finish high school.
- The sons of teen mothers are 13 percent more likely to end up in prison.
- The children of teen mothers are two times more likely to suffer abuse and neglect compared to children of older mothers.

The Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference is partnering with the Tennessee Department of Human Services on this effort.

For more information about *What's the Rush?*, call Guy Jones at (615) 532-2594. To access the campaign fact sheet, campaign materials and clips from the campaign video, please visit <http://www.mpf.com/whatstherush/>.

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